

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN, JR.

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN, JR.

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH(INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN(INFOGL

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

NEA/INS - MR. KUX

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING JULY 29, 1975.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES CURRENTLY IN DISCUSSION WITH
JORDANIAN LEADERS ON SETTING UP A NEW PROGRAM FOR AN AIR
DEFENSE SYSTEM THAT WOULD PROVIDE SOMEWHAT LESS THAN WAS
IN THE ORIGINAL PACKAGE OF 14 HAWK MISSILES?

A. I THINK MOST OF YOU KNOW WHAT THE ACTION THAT WAS TAKEN
YESTERDAY WAS AND WHAT OUR INTENTION IS. WE'LL BE DOING
THIS BEFORE CLOSE OF BUSINESS TOMORROW BECAUSE THE FIRST
TWENTY DAYS EXPIRES THEN. WE ARE GOING TO BE SIMPLY
RESUBMITTING THE SAME NOTIFICATION ON THE HAWK SALE THAT
HAS BEEN BEFORE THE CONGRESS. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT.

A. WE ARE IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT.
AMBASSADOR PICKERING, AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, WENT BACK OVER
THE WEEKEND. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION WITH
THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT AND WITH THE CONGRESS, WHEN IT
COMES BACK FROM ITS RECESS IN THE HOPE THAT THIS PROBLEM
CAN BE WORKED OUT.

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Q. BOB, ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT JORDAN
NEEDED ONLY THREE TO SIX BATTERIES AND THAT IT WAS THE
STATE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION TO GO UP TO 14. WHAT MAKES
THE STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT IT KNOWS BETTER THAN
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF WHAT THE MILITARY REQUIREMENTS
OF A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE?

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A. WELL, LET ME MAKE TWO OR THREE COMMENTS ON THIS,
MARVIN. NUMBER ONE, WE HAVE NOT SEEN, I HAVE NOT SEEN,
THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIR-
MAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF IN CLOSED SESSION. THAT'S
POINT ONE.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE REPORTING THAT HAS COME OUT ON THE
CHAIRMAN'S TESTIMONY MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY ACCURATE. I
FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DIFFER-
ENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE
STATE DEPARTMENT WITH REGARD TO THE LETTER OF OFFER THAT
WAS SENT UP TO THE COMMITTEES BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

AND I TALKED WITH JOE LAITIN OVER IN THE DEFENSE ABOUT A HALF AN HOUR AGO, AND HE SAID THAT IF ANYBODY WISHED TO TALK WITH HIM ABOUT ANY OF THE DETAILS OF THIS HE WOULD BE GLAD TO TRY AND HELP OUT. BUT I PERSONALLY AM NOT CLEWED INTO THE CHAIRMAN'S THINKING, AND I HAVEN'T INVESTIGATED IT AND RESEARCHED IT. BUT JOE LAITIN SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO TALK WITH ANY OF YOU ON THIS.

Q. MARVIN AND I ARE REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT SENATOR CASE SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE JOINT CHIEFS' CONSIDERED OPINION WAS THAT NO MORE THAN SIX WERE NECESSARY FOR JORDAN'S AIR DEFENSE. IS THAT INACCURATE?

A. IF THE QUESTION IS, AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY POSED TO ME, THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND DEFENSE, AND THAT "WE KNEW BETTER THAN DEFENSE" HOW MANY BATTERIES OUGHT TO BE RECOMMENDED, THEN THAT PART IS INACCURATE.

Q. WELL DEFENSE WANTED 6 AND THE OFFER CAME OUT AT 14. OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE SOMEWHERE.

A. ON THAT QUESTION, THE QUESTION OF JUST WHAT DEFENSE WANTED -- WHAT GENERAL BROWN WAS SPECIFICALLY TALKING ABOUT -- I WISH YOU WOULD GO AND TRY AND GET SOME OF THE DETAILS FROM JOE LAITIN, BECAUSE HE SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO CLARIFY, AS MUCH AS HE COULD. I DO NOT HAVE THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CLARIFICATIONS ON WHAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF SAID.

Q. BUT YOU ARE AWARE OF WHAT SENATOR CASE SAID. THAT'S BEEN WIDELY REPORTED, IN QUOTATION MARKS.

A. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT HERE.

Q. BUT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT WHAT HE SAID IS WRONG, AND HE IS INTERPRETING GENERAL BROWN WRONG, BECAUSE YOU ARE SAYING THAT LAITIN SAYS THAT BROWN AND KISSINGER ARE AGREED ON THE 14.

A. I UNDERSTAND, AND I REALLY CANNOT GO ANY FURTHER BECAUSE I DO NOT KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT IT. BUT IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE REPORTING ON WHAT GENERAL BROWN ALLEGEDLY SAID IN CLOSED TESTIMONY MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY ACCURATE. THAT IS THE WAY IT WAS DESCRIBED TO ME, AND MAYBE YOU CAN GET FROM JOE SOME DEFINITE CLARIFICATION ON THAT.

Q. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO HAVE DISCUSSION WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT. ON WHAT ASPECT

OF THIS? ON A FURTHER DELAY OR ON A REDUCTION?

A. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF A REDUCTION. I HAVE GONE INTO THAT; WE DID IT LAST NIGHT.

WE ARE TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS, AND THE COMMITMENT THAT WE HAVE TO JORDAN. WE ARE TRYING TO WORK OUT THIS PROBLEM AND WHAT WE DID YESTERDAY.

THE PURPOSE OF WHAT WE DID YESTERDAY IS TO AFFORD FURTHER TIME, FOLLOWING THE RECESS, IN ORDER TO TRY AND WORK OUT THE PROBLEM. BUT AS WE SAID LAST NIGHT AND I SAID EARLIER THIS MORNING --

Q. YES, BUT I AM TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU'RE DISCUSSING WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT, THOUGH. WHAT IS THERE TO DISCUSS WHEN YOU HAVE ONCE SAID WE HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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GOT TO DELAY THIS?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF WHAT TOM PICKERING IS SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSING WITH JORDAN. I AM JUST SAYING THAT HE IS TRYING TO WORK OUT THIS PROBLEM WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT -- WITH CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES HERE -- TO TRY AND OBTAIN THE OBJECTIVES THAT I JUST STATED.

Q. NO, YOU JUST SAID THAT IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF REDUCING THE SIZE OF THE OFFER. IS THAT CORRECT?

A. WE ARE RESUBMITTING THE SAME NOTIFICATION.

Q. YES. I MEAN, IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE JORDANIANS, THERE IS NO QUESTION WHATSOEVER OF REDUCING THE SIZE.

A. AS FAR AS I KNOW, THAT IS THE CASE. YES.

Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO RESUBMIT THE SAME OFFER IN SEPTEMBER WHEN CONGRESS GETS BACK?

A. THERE WILL BE TWO SUBMISSIONS:

ONE SUBMISSION NOW AND A RESUBMISSION OF THE SAME ONE.

AND THEN, AS WE SAID LAST NIGHT, THERE WILL BE A RESUBMISSION OF THAT -- THE SAME LETTER OF OFFER -- WHICH WOULD BRING IT TO A TOTAL OF SIXTY DAYS, IF MY ARITHMETIC SERVES ME CORRECTLY, IN ORDER TO GIVE THE CONGRESS A FULL TWENTY DAYS IN THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER TO CONSIDER IT, SO THAT THEY DON'T FEEL THAT WE ARE DOING

TWENTY DAYS NOW, WHILE THEY ARE IN RECESS, AND THEN ANOTHER TWENTY DAYS WHICH WOULD EXPIRE, ABOUT THREE OR FOUR, OR FIVE DAYS AFTER CONGRESS RECONVENES.

WE WILL, IF NECESSARY, BE PREPARED TO RESUBMIT THE SAME LETTER OF OFFER SO THAT THEY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE THE FULL TWENTY DAYS WHILE THEY ARE IN SESSION.

Q. WELL THE QUESTION IS: IF YOU ARE RESUBMITTING THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SAME LETTER, WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET THE VOTE TAKE PLACE?

A. BECAUSE, AS WE EXPLAINED YESTERDAY, IT WAS DETERMINED BY BOTH SIDES THAT WE NEED MORE TIME TO TRY AND WORK OUT THE PROBLEM THAT EXISTS, BY FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN AND WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q. THEN WHO ARE YOU EXPECTING TO CHANGE THEIR MIND? THE CONGRESS? OR JORDAN?

A. I CANNOT ANSWER THAT. MAYBE BOTH. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. BUT YOU SAID A MOMENT AGO THAT YOU NEEDED THE TIME TO TAKE CARE OF THE CONCERNS OF THE CONGRESS -- "AND OUR COMMITMENT TO JORDAN." AND MY QUESTION TO YOU IS BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIFIC:

DEFINE THAT COMMITMENT TO JORDAN IN GENERAL TERMS; AND SPECIFICALLY, IS THAT COMMITMENT NOW BEING MEASURED BY THE 14 BATTERIES?

A. I CANNOT GET INTO ANY FIGURES -- I HAVE SAID THAT FOR THE LAST TEN DAYS OR TWO WEEKS -- IN DISCUSSING THIS. BUT WE HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO JORDAN TO ASSIST THEM WITH THEIR AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM; AND THE LETTER OF OFFER TO THAT EFFECT WAS SENT UP TO CONGRESS NINETEEN DAYS AGO.

Q. RIGHT.
BUT WAS THE COMMITMENT TO HELP THEM IN A GENERAL SENSE? TO HELP THEM SET UP AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM -- OR TO SELL SPECIFICALLY 14 HAWK BATTERIES?

THERE IS A VERY CLEAR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. YOU CAN HELP SOMEBODY WITH SIX BATTERIES -- OR YOU CAN HELP THEM WITH FOURTEEN -- NOW WHAT WAS YOUR "COMMITMENT?" YOU USED THE WORD?

A. I CANNOT GET INTO THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT WE HAVE SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS -- I JUST CANNOT DO IT.

Q. DO YOU MAKE COMMITMENTS TO GOVERNMENTS BEFORE YOU

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CHECK WITH CONGRESS ON WHETHER IT'S EVEN FEASIBLE TO LIVE UP TO THE COMMITMENT?

A. I WAS ASKED THIS LAST WEEK WHILY YOU WERE AWAY AND IT - IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS FOR QUITE SOME TIME ON THIS SUBJECT. I CANNOT GIVE YOU THE EXACT DATE WHEN WE STARTED.

Q. WELL
ARE YOU SURPRISED, THEN, BY THE OPPOSITION?

A. I THINK, YES, WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE OPPOSITION.

Q. WELL DOES A LETTER OF OFFER OF SALE TO A COUNTRY CONSTITUTE A COMMITMENT TO SELL?

WHAT I AM TRYING TO GET AT IS, AT WHAT POINT IN THE NEGOTIATION OF AN ARMS SALE DID IT BECOME A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH -- OR ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES -- TO GO AHEAD AND SELL WHAT THEY HAD AGREED TO SELL?

A. I CANNOT TELL YOU THE SPECIFIC POINT. I DO KNOW THAT THIS WAS DISCUSSED WHEN THE KING OF JORDAN WAS HERE LAST APRIL. THERE WAS A TEAM THAT WENT OUT TO JORDAN AND THEN IT WAS DISCUSSED IN DETAIL WITH THE KING WHEN HE WAS HERE.

BUT I CANNOT GIVE YOU THE EXACT DATE WHEN IT WOULD HAVE BECOME A "COMMITMENT."

Q. BACK TO MARVIN'S QUESTION FOR A SECOND:

IT SEEMS, THOUGH, THAT A LETTER OF OFFER IS BEING REFERRED TO AS AN AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO JORDAN. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU SAID BEFORE: WE ARE TRYING TO SEE HOW WE CAN WORK THIS OUT TO MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO JORDAN AND TO WORK THIS OUT WITH CONGRESS --

A. YES.

Q. AND THIS COMMITMENT THAT EVERYONE IS LOOSELY REFERRING
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TO, WHETHER IT'S PRECISE OR NOT, IS 14 BATTERIES. NOW, IS THAT THE COMMITMENT? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

A. I'M NOT SAYING THAT THE LETTER ITSELF IS THE ACT OF COMMITMENT. MY ASSUMPTION WAS THAT THERE WAS A COMMIT-

MENT TO ASSIST JORDAN WITH ITS AID DEFENSE BEFORE A LETTER
OF OFFER WAS EVEN DRAWN UP. I THINK THAT THE LETTER OF
OFFER IS PART OF THE MECHANICS THAT YOU GO THROUGH BEFORE
YOU CONSUMMATE A SALE. BUT I THINK THE COMMITMENT
CERTAINLY IS NOT THE LETTER OF OFFER. THAT'S MY UNDER-
STANDING. INGERSOLL

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